

Blessed Are (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] When we looked at the first two verses of the Sermon on the Mount last week, we talked about how the sermon demonstrates that the new birth is essential to obtain true blessings.

True blessings are blessings as Jesus defines them. The essential theme of the Bible from beginning to end is that God's historical purpose is to call out a people for himself, that is, a holy people set apart from the world to belong to him and to obey him, and that people's vocation is to be true to its identity or to be a holy and different people in all its outlook and behavior.

Given that Christians are to be set apart from the world and different in outlook and behavior, you probably have guessed that Jesus defines true blessings differently than the world at large defines them.

We'll get into that more tonight as we actually begin digging into what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. For believers, true blessings and happiness are possible only when we live as God expects us to live, and only those who are born again can begin to live up to that standard.

Jesus' new way of living comes from a new way of thinking, and the new way of thinking comes from a new life. Although we'll be studying the Sermon on the Mount for several months, always remember that the sermon text from Matthew 5-7 is one sermon.

[1 : 33] And if we simply read those chapters without commentary, they would only take about 10 minutes to read. Because of that, many people believe that Matthew provided more of an outline than a word-for-word transcription of the sermon.

Regardless, we'll remind ourselves as we go along about how one section of the sermon connects to another. We're going to go ahead and read verses 3-12 of Matthew 5 right now.

Starting in Matthew 5, verse 3, Jesus said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[2 : 36] Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

I've titled this section of the scripture, Blessed are, because Jesus begins every major statement with the words translated as blessed are in the English Standard Version. Most major translations use that same translation as well.

Covering the ten verses from Matthew 5, 3-12 will take us more than one week. We'll actually get through just verse 3 tonight, but the same main idea applies to the entire section.

That main idea is that Jesus expects every believer to demonstrate all attributes of character and conduct described in these verses. Once again, Jesus expects every believer to demonstrate all attributes of character and conduct described in these verses.

That main idea is a tall order. That's something we can never do on our own. And that's why we must keep in mind what we saw last week. And that was that the Sermon on the Mount demonstrates that the new birth is essential to obtain true blessings.

[3 : 56] The Sermon standards are much too high and demanding to be met by human power alone. Only those who partake of God's own nature through Jesus Christ can fulfill the Sermon's demands.

And the standards on the Sermon on the Mount go far beyond those of Moses in the law. The Sermon on the Mount standards demand both righteous actions and righteous attitudes. So in other words, it demands not just that men do right, but that they be right. No part of Scripture more clearly shows man's desperate situation apart from God.

To help you keep track of where we are as we look at the verses over the next few weeks, your handout has the outline that we'll cover for these verses. We'll start with blessed defined. We'll go to blessed described. And then we'll go to behavior demanded. We commonly know this section of Scripture as the Beatitudes.

[4 : 57] Some theologians like to argue about whether Jesus gives us seven, eight, or even nine Beatitudes here. The theologians who argue for seven Beatitudes believe that the Beatitudes stop at verse nine because those are the verses that describe a Christian's character.

In verse 10, they think that Jesus changes themes a bit and describes how the Christian interacts with the world. And because of that theme change, the seven Beatitude camp omits verses 10 through 12 from the list of Beatitudes.

And theologians who argue for eight Beatitudes also believe that the Beatitudes continue through verse 12. However, those theologians see verse 11 as being a continuation of verse 10 because both verses have the same subject, and that subject is persecution.

Then the theologians that think there are nine Beatitudes simply count the number of times that the word translated as blessed appears in the text. Is anybody wondering why we should care about whether the Beatitudes is seven, eight, or nine?

Actually, we don't really need to worry about that much, but some of you may be thinking that the number of the Beatitudes is obvious. I bring up the difference of opinion for two reasons.

[6 : 19] One is that the important thing is understanding what Jesus said and meant. So the account itself is unimportant because it could distract us from digging into the meaning of what Jesus said.

And the second reason for bringing up the difference of opinion on the number of Beatitudes is that we'll settle the issue right now before we go any further. So are you ready for the answer of whether Jesus intended the number to be seven, eight, or nine?

That answer is yes. He intended it to be either seven, eight, or nine. If you were hoping to get a more definitive answer than that, you'll have to do your own research because we won't cover that anymore in these lessons.

With that introduction, let's go ahead and start digging into the text. And the first thing we will cover is blessed, defined. Blessed, defined.

The same word starts each verse from verse 3 through verse 11. And of course, we know that word is blessed. We've already touched on its meaning a bit, but we need to spend some more time on that meaning.

[7 : 30] Knowing what Jesus meant by the repetitive word here is foundational to understanding the meaning of this section. And as we get into the Beatitudes themselves and go beyond that, knowing what Jesus means by the repetitive word also is foundational to understanding the entire sermon.

Of course, we already know what the repeated English word is. That word is blessed. And the Greek word there is makarios. And in the Greek, that word means happy, fortunate, or blissful. Homer used the word to describe a wealthy man, and Plato used it to describe someone who succeeded in business. Both Homer and Hesiod spoke of the Greek gods as being happy within themselves because they were unaffected by the world of men who were subject to poverty, disease, weakness, misfortune, and death.

So the fullest meaning of the term had to do with an inward contentedness that is unaffected by circumstances. That's the kind of happiness God desires for his people.

That's a state of joy and well-being that does not depend on physical or temporary circumstances. To help us understand the meaning of the biblical word, blessed, a little better, let's look at a few cases where the Greek word or its Hebrew equivalent are used in the Old and New Testaments.

[8 : 57] The word blessed often is used to describe God. And here are just a few examples. In Psalm 68, verse 35, David ended that psalm with these words.

He said, Awesome is God from his sanctuary, the God of Israel. He is the one who gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God. Solomon said these words in Psalm 72, verses 18 and 19.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever. May the whole earth be filled with his glory.

Amen and amen. Going over to the New Testament, Paul wrote these words in 1 Timothy 1, verse 11. Then, he said, He wrote the words in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

Then later on in 1 Timothy, Paul applied the word blessed to Jesus when he wrote these words in 1 Timothy 6, 15. Here he's talking about Jesus' second coming, and he described Jesus as, He who is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

[10:16] We can't get very far into our study of the Sermon on the Mount without realizing that by its own definition, Jesus himself was the most happy. Let me explain what I mean by that there.

When we turn to the Beatitudes, we actually find them to be a portrait of Jesus. After all, who is the man who was poor in spirit, but possessed the kingdom of heaven?

Well, obviously, that's Jesus. That's why Paul can say about him that he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, for which cause God exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow.

And that comes from Philipians 2, verses 8-10. We'll look at those verses again a little bit later. But continuing on, also think about who is the man who mourned and was yet comforted.

Obviously, that is Jesus too, because the 22nd Psalm describes that. It's possible to define verses or define verses that identify each statement of character in the Beatitudes with Jesus.

[11:29] And that shows that he is the meek one, the one who hungered and thirsted for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemaker, the one persecuted for righteousness' sake, and so on, all the way through the Beatitudes.

We mentioned the main idea of this lesson a few minutes ago and said that Jesus expects every believer to demonstrate all attributes of character and conduct described in these verses.

That's true, but we could say it even more simply than that. Said a little more simply, Jesus expects every believer to be like him. Jesus expects every believer to be like him.

Blessedness is a characteristic of God, and it can be a characteristic of men only as they share in the nature of God. There's no true blessedness, no perfect contentedness, and joy of the sort of which Jesus speaks here, except that which comes from a personal relationship to Jesus himself. And through that relationship, we see magnificent promises as we become partakers of the divine nature. If we are to find true happiness, we must not seek it the world's way.

[12:43] We have to look for it in the way that Jesus outlines here. According to Jesus, the way to happiness is found in a poverty of spirit, in a character that is marked by meekness, in a hunger and thirst for righteousness, in mercy, in purity, and in a desire to make peace.

When you think about it, Jesus lived these things, and because he lived them, we too can find happiness. The Sermon on the Mount really is the life of Jesus, and the life of Jesus is communicated to the Christian by the Spirit of Jesus, which we know as the Holy Spirit who comes to live within the Christian.

We'll move now to the second section of the lesson in verses 3-11. We'll see blessed described. Blessed described. And before we look at each beatitude individually, we need to consider one more thing.

The beatitudes are connected to each other. Said another way, the beatitudes build upon each other. Listen to how John MacArthur described that connection.

He said, The beatitudes are progressive. As we will see, as each is discussed in detail, they are not in a random, haphazard order. Each leads to the other in logical succession.

[14:05] Being poor in spirit reflects the right attitude we should have to our sinful condition, which then should lead us to mourn, to be meek and gentle, to hunger and thirst for righteousness, to be merciful, pure in heart, and to have a peacemaking spirit.

A Christian who has all these qualities will be so far above the world that his life will rebuke the world, which will bring persecution from the world and light to the world. You can see from the last part of that MacArthur quote that he carried his quote all the way through verse 16.

So that we can look for the progression in that beatitudes before we consider each one individually, let's read verses 3 through 12 again. Jesus said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

[15 : 17] Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones said, When Christians are finally perfect, they will all manifest all these characteristics fully.

But here in this world, and in time, there is a variation to be seen. We are meant to manifest all of them together and at the same time. Indeed, I think we can go even further and say that the character of this detailed description is such that it becomes quite obvious that the moment we analyze each beatitude, each one of necessity implies the other.

Each one of these, in a sense, demands the others. It's impossible to truly manifest one of these graces and to conform to the blessing that is pronounced upon it without at the same time showing the others also.

The beatitudes are a complete whole and you cannot divide them. One of them may be more manifest perhaps in one person than another, but all of them are there. The relative proportions may vary, but they are all present and they are all meant to be present at the same time.

[16 : 43] That sounds a lot like the main idea for this lesson and of course that is that Jesus expects every believer to demonstrate all attributes of character and conduct described here.

Or as we said earlier, the simpler way to say it is that Jesus expects every believer to be like him. Listen to this next quote from Martin Lloyd-Jones.

He went on to say, none of these descriptions refers to what we may call a natural tendency. Each one of them is wholly a disposition which is produced by grace alone and the operation of the Holy Spirit upon us.

He says, I cannot emphasize this too strongly. No man naturally conforms to the descriptions given here in the Beatitudes and we must be very careful to draw a sharp distinction between the spiritual qualities that are here described and the material ones which appear to be like them.

What we have here in each individual case is not a description of a natural temper. It is a description of a disposition that is produced by grace. So listen to that last part again.

[17 : 50] What we have here in each individual case is not a description of a natural temper. It is rather a disposition that is produced by grace. And that statement sounds a lot like the main idea for the entire sermon which was the main idea we discussed last week and that again is that the new birth is essential to obtain true blessings.

So let's start digging into the Beatitudes now. Verse 3 is where Jesus said, Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

We covered the meaning of blessed in detail earlier so in this section we'll focus on the meaning of poor in spirit and then also kingdom of heaven. The first thing we need to recognize is that this verse has nothing to do with financial poverty.

Jesus talks about the poor in spirit. That seems obvious that it has nothing to do with financial poverty because the verse says that but we need to understand that to really understand the proper meaning of what Jesus said here.

What our Lord is concerned about here is the spirit. It's the poverty of the spirit. So in other words it's ultimately man's attitude toward himself. And the Beatitudes indicate more clearly than any other scripture the essential difference between the natural man and the Christian.

[19 : 15] Consider some of the characteristics that the unsaved world values. Self-confidence, self-reliance, individualism, and listen to whether this Martin Lloyd-Jones quote rings true about the world in general.

He said, if you want to succeed in a profession the great thing is to give the impression that you are a success. So you suggest that you are more successful than you actually are and people say that is the man to go to.

That is the whole principle on which life is run at the present time. Express yourself, believe in yourself, realize the powers that are innate in yourself and the whole world will see and know them if you let them see and know them.

Does that sound a lot like today? A.W. Pink said, by nature we are all well pleased with ourselves and mad enough to think that we deserve something good at the hands of God.

Let men but conduct themselves decently in a civil way keeping themselves from grosser sins and they are rich in spirit pride filling their hearts and they are self-righteous.

[20 : 26] Nothing short of a miracle can change the course of this stream. In Willard's Exodus studies we saw an example of someone who lacks the quality of being poor in spirit.

Pharaoh was rich in spirit. Remember Exodus 5 verses 1 and 2. Exodus 5 1 and 2 say Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh Thus says the Lord the God of Israel Let my people go that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.

But Pharaoh said Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord and moreover I will not let Israel go.

Unsaved people of that day and today probably would react to Pharaoh's statement by saying something like You tell him how it is, king. That's the way to be a strong leader.

However, Pharaoh is the exact opposite of someone who will be blessed by God and we'll see that when we restart the Exodus study in a few months. In the meantime here's another quote from A.W. Pink to show what it means to be poor in spirit.

[21 : 42] He said To be poor in spirit is to realize that I have nothing I am nothing and I can do nothing without God and have need of all things. Poverty of spirit is a consciousness of my emptiness the result of the spirit's work within.

It issues from the painful discovery that all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags. It follows the awakening that my best performances are unacceptable an abomination to the thrice holy one. poverty of spirit enables itself and evidence itself by bringing the individual into the dust before God acknowledging his utter helplessness and deservingness of hell.

It corresponds to the initial wakening of the prodigal in the far country when he began to be in want. So said another way the one who is poor in spirit is nothing in his own eyes and feels that his proper place is in the dust before God.

He may through false teaching or worldliness leave that spot for a while but God knows how to bring him back and in God's faithfulness and love God will bring him back for that's the place of blessing for his children.

[22 : 57] We see how to cultivate this God honoring spirit in Matthew 11 verse 29. In Matthew 11 verse 29 Jesus said take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls.

Here's another MacArthur quote he said to be poor in spirit is to recognize one's spiritual poverty apart from God it is to see oneself as one really is lost hopeless helpless apart from Jesus Christ every person is spiritually destitute no matter what is education wealth social status accomplishments or religious knowledge that is the point of the first beatitude the poor in spirit are those who recognize their total spiritual destitution and their complete dependence upon God they perceive that there are no saving resources in themselves and that they can only beg for mercy and grace they know they have no spiritual merit and they know they can earn no spiritual reward their pride is gone their self assurance is gone and they stand empty handed before God in spirit also conveys the sense that the recognition of poverty is genuine not an act that last sentence is key too listen to that again he says in spirit also conveys the sense that the recognition of poverty is genuine not an act have you ever suspected that somebody might have been faking being poor in spirit just because they thought it was the right thing to do well if you ever run across somebody doing that that person really hasn't grasped the meaning of this beatitude

Jesus' choice of words drives home the point of just how poor the poor in spirit really are there are two Greek words that are normally used to refer to the poor one of them is used of the widow in Luke 21 who had only two small copper coins she was poor but at least she had something the second word the word use here means utterly destitute with no means of self-support wholly dependent upon somebody else for sustenance so when Jesus talks about being poor in spirit he's not talking about somebody being somewhat poor he's talking about somebody who is totally destitute and must depend completely on somebody else to exist so being poor in spirit is to be spiritually bankrupt before God it's the mental state of the man who's recognized something of the

righteousness and holiness of God and who has seen the sin and corruption of man's own heart and he's acknowledged his inability to please

God so these quotes defining poor in spirit are from some theologians but now let's use scripture to prove those definitions you have all the cross references in your handout and this is going to be a little bit like a bible drill here so you don't need to follow along necessarily but you can look them up to make sure I read the right verses as we go through if you want to once you get home we'll start with Isaiah 57 15 and we see these words isn't that interesting that God says he dwells with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit moving on to Proverbs 29 23 that verse simply says one's pride will bring him low but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor

Ezekiel 21 26 says thus says the Lord remove the turban and take off the crown things shall not remain as they are exalt that which is low and bring low that which is exalted so what's the significance of removing the turban and taking off the crown there it's talking about somebody who has a high worldly position humbling himself before God so let's move to the New Testament now and look at some cross references in the New Testament Matthew 18 1 through 4 say this at that time the disciples came to Jesus saying who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven and calling to him a child he put him in the midst of them and said truly I say to you unless you turn and become like children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven later on in

[28 : 13] Matthew 23 12 is where Jesus said whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted Jesus said this in Luke 18 verses 13 through 14 when he was contrasting the tax collector with the Pharisee Luke 18 13 and 14 say but the tax collector standing far off would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but beat his breast saying God be merciful to me a sinner Jesus says I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled but the one who humbles himself will be exalted moving on to James chapter 4 James 4 6 says that he gives more grace therefore it says God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble James 4 10 says humble yourselves before the

Lord and he will exalt you and here's one more 1 Peter chapter 5 verses 5b through 6 say clothe yourselves all of you with humility toward one another for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you you know if we see something one time in the Bible it's important if we see something that many times in the Bible how much more significant does it become the concept of being poor in spirit is found throughout the Old and New Testaments as we've seen here and verse 3 also shows that Jesus meant the Beatitudes to be in a specific order being poor in spirit means that we empty ourselves of any notion of being worthy to deserve God's favor being poor in spirit means that we empty ourselves of any notion of being worthy to deserve

God's favor we have to become poor in spirit before we can become rich in God's spiritual blessings and as we go through the Beatitudes we'll see that this is the only Beatitude that involves an emptying the other Beatitudes exhort us to fill ourselves with qualities such as mournfulness meekness a hunger and thirst for righteousness mercifulness purity in heart and peacemaking but we have to empty ourselves of our own pride first before we can have room to fill ourselves with the other qualities this pattern of emptiness coming before fullness should never surprise us it actually is the pattern of the gospel consider the gospel to be saved we first have to realize that our sinfulness means that we are deserving of death once we come to that realization then we're prepared to be filled with the realization that Jesus saves us by grace through faith it goes further than that though because

Jesus himself followed the pattern of emptiness followed by exaltation we looked at some of these verses a little bit earlier but let's go ahead and read Philippians 2 verses 5 through 11 Paul wrote there have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross therefore God has highly exalted!

him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father so you see the pattern there how even Jesus emptied himself before he could become exalted so once again we see how the Beatitudes are telling us

that we are to be like Jesus looking back into our text tonight Jesus does more than just tell us that we should be poor in spirit he tells us why we should be poor in spirit verse 3 says blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven the kingdom promised here involves the messianic rule of our Lord Jesus Christ and think about it though the blessed ones are not addressed as subjects of the kingdom but as fellow rulers with

[33 : 12] Christ scripture repeatedly speaks of the high position of those who gain this kingdom listen to this expert of John's description of the new Jerusalem in Revelation chapter 22 verses 3 through 5 John wrote no longer will there be anything accursed but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it and his servants will worship him they will see his face and his name will be on their foreheads and night will be no more they will need no light of lamp or sun for the Lord God will be their light and they will reign forever and ever so that's not the language of a subject of the kingdom that's the language of a ruler we need to notice a few more things about the kingdom reward a permanent reward a pure reward and a prestigious reward the title belongs to the poor in spirit now and

I like his example that he gives here he says some want to make this future tense but it is present tense it's like when a new car is purchased it may be if the dealer is getting prepared for you to pick it up in a few hours or even a few days but it is still your car now God is preparing the kingdom for its coming but that does not alter the fact that it now belongs to the poor in spirit and being of heaven the kingdom blessing is lasting world kingdoms don't last we know that men who rule as kings and presidents and prime ministers are on the stage for a short time and then they no longer are around anymore many great kingdoms of the past such as ninema and babylon are nothing but ruins today but the kingdom of heaven is forever and that's why we can say that this blessing is permanent it will always satisfy when we have the kingdom of heaven

John Butler goes on to say if there is one thing that is evident about earthly kingdoms! it purifies the heavenly kingdom will have no laws that leave out God or legalize vile living the heavenly kingdom will exalt God and his word it will exalt character so now you're starting to see why the blessing is also extremely prestigious the honors gained from world kingdoms are nothing compared to the honors obtained from the kingdom of heaven the honors from the kingdom of heaven are far greater remember the main idea Jesus expects every believer to demonstrate all attributes of character and conduct that are described in these verses or said the simpler way Jesus expects every believer to be like him we looked at some of this already but here are a few more quotes that reinforce this point again this is from martin lloyd jones and he said all christians are to be like this read the beatitudes and there you have a description of what every christian is meant to be it is not merely the description of some exceptional christians our

Lord are going to be and can be in this world it is his description of every single christian in other words we can't say well these don't apply to me they apply to mike dursham because he's much more holy than i am i'm a little worried about mike since he said amen to that he might need to go back and listen to this lesson on the!

he's a! he's a martin lloyd jones went on to say any one of us every one of us whatever we may be by birth and nature is meant as a christian to be like this and not only are we meant to be like this we can be like this and that's the important thing here not only are we meant to be like this we can be like this he goes on to say here are characteristics and dispositions that are all the result of grace the product of the holy spirit and therefore possible for all they cut right across all natural states and natural dispositions james mcgomery boyce said we must recognize that we shall never get anywhere in our search for happiness until we give up trying to find it by our own efforts and receive it as

[38 : 08] God's free gift he went on to say that this means that God is the source of all spiritual blessings and in this as in all things we must look to him James presents this simple truth very clearly and here's another reference from James chapter 1 verses 16 and 17 James wrote do not be deceived my beloved brothers every good gift and every perfect gift is from above coming down from the father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change certainly the first effect of the beatitudes have on those who understand them is that their minds turn to the heavenly father voice continued we must realize that the blessing of

God in an individual life begins with the forgiveness of sins so if you don't know where to start to receive God's blessing the first thing to do is ask God to forgive your sins when David wanted to speak of the happiness of the believers in the Old Testament times he wrote blessed is the one

whose transgression is forgiven whose sin is covered blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit that comes from Psalm 32 verses 1 and 2 Paul quoted these verses years later as a description of the initial happiness that comes to a man who believes in Christ Jesus and Paul quoted that verse in Romans 4 8 sin is a horrible barrier that divides a person from God and think about this song that we often sing the chorus of showers of blessings says there shall be showers of blessing this is the promise of love there shall be seasons refreshing sent from the

Savior above for the unsaved man sin is somewhat like a great black umbrella! sin is like a great black umbrella that keeps the man from the showers of blessing he says he can walk about under the umbrella hunting for puddles but they will always be muddy and he will not be satisfied instead of this he must ask God to remove the umbrella as God has promised to do for anyone who will trust in Christ death and resurrection and thereby place him under the direct flow of happiness recognize the fact that happiness comes from God learn that the first step to God's happiness is the forgiveness of sin find it practically through the enabling power of Christ's spirit finding happiness is as simple as that men seek it through money fame power love security and usually in every way but what

Jesus says to do here Jesus said elsewhere on the Sermon on the Mount though seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you Jade White Pentecost summarized verse 3 like this he said what do you have to offer God nothing what does God have to give you everything what makes God's riches yours a cry for help a cry of dependence a confession of your own helplessness that's why it's important to know what Jesus meant when he said blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven let's pray father we thank you for the reminder that you give us here of the character that you expect from all believers as we continue to work through these beatitudes please remind us of that and please continue to allow your spirit to help us become more and more evidencing of these characteristics we thank you again for what you've done for us and we thank you that you have given a way to experience your blessings in Jesus name we pray amen

Thank you.